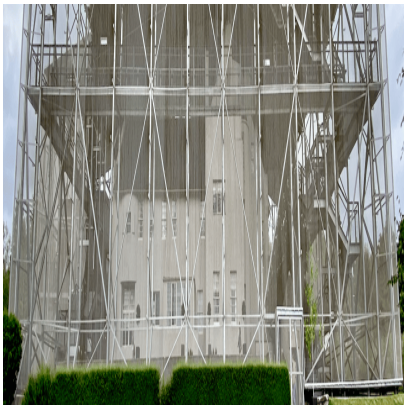


Cybersecurity at the front

### Description

default watermark

The *Cybersecurity Bible* by Hugo Hoffman encourages anyone who would be a cybersecurity specialist to â??think like the enemyâ?• (604). The guide counsels vigorous defence against potential attackers: purveyors of phishing *attacks*, de-authentication *attacks*, man-in-the-middle *attacks*, etc. Cybersecurity inevitably associates with defence, conflict, contest and war.

## Surface vulnerabilities

Concepts of cybersecurity instil a sense of panic about risks and threats, an urgency that undoubtedly favours the interests of cybersecurity industries. One cyber security firm (*IOActive Labs*) refers to the â??huge and unknown attack surface on smarter citiesâ?• (9).

That cities are prone to â??surface vulnerabilitiesâ?• implies the city is a kind of fortress with boundaries threatened by breach from external forces, as if active agents are ever present and intent on sabotage. That adversarial framing of place is familiar to architecture, including the idea of a home as a fortress and early architectural theorist Vitruviusâ??s attention to catapults, ballistae and other means of breaching city walls and defending against attacks.

## La guerre Ã  trois

This militaristic framing also underpins the softer characterisations of the cybersecurity challenge. Consider the three fictional characters who live in cryptographic textbooks: Alice, Bob and Eve. As described in Simon Singhâ??s *The Code Book* , â??Alice wants to send a message to Bob, or vice versa, and Eve is trying to eavesdropâ?• (257). The third party (Eve) wants to intercept communications between legitimate correspondents. That innocent sounding mÃ©nage Ã  trois dramatises active malevolent agency.

Though many of us are concerned about privacy, in everyday social life we donâ??t assume that others want to actively invade our private communications or data. Rather than a militaristic framing, other metaphors apply to maintaining privacy. For example, the metaphor of *leakage* implies a container that

holds something of value: our integrity, independence, relationships, information. Under this metaphor, secret-keepers donâ??t want that value diluted as it spills out and dissipates into general discourse. Secrets are objects of value to many and are shared in ways that preserve that value.

## Everyday privacy

There may be no malicious agents wanting to intercept secret communications or capitalise on inadvertent exposure. Rather than enmity and war, emotional framings associated with pride, shame and gossip serve to preserve privacy in most everyday relationships.

In practice, the agency of Eve the saboteur may be inactive, or not present, or discouraged out of respect for Alice and Bobâ??s privacy. The militaristic cybersecurity model is of use in understanding how cryptography works but itâ??s worth noting how alien is this militaristic framing of everyday privacy. That said, many of us are loath to abandon the idea of armies altogether, and are content for them to be mostly invisible. In the same way, I think I am content for cybersecurity to operate beyond my everyday awareness, under the radar.

default watermark

## Bibliography


- Cerrudo, Cesar. 2015. An Emerging US (and World) Threat: Cities Wide Open to Cyber Attacks (White Paper). *IOActive Labs*. Available online: https://ioactive.com/pdfs/IOActive_HackingCitiesPaper_CesarCerrudo.pdf (accessed 13 October 2021).
- Coyne, Richard, John Lee, and Martin Parker. 2004. Permeable portals: designing congenial web sites for the e-society. *IADIS International Conference: e-Society*, (1)379-386. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Richard-Coyne/publication/267701098_PERMEABLE_PORTALS_DESIGNING_CONGENIAL_WEB_SITES_SOCIETY/links/54ac58fd0cf21c477139e0f1/PERMEABLE-PORTALS-DESIGNING-CONGENIAL-WEB-SITES-FOR-THE-E-SOCIETY.pdf
- Hoffman, Hugo. 2020. *Cybersecurity Bible: Security Threats, Frameworks, Cryptography & Network Security*. Hugo Hoffman
- Singh, Simon. 2000. *The Code Book: The Science of Secrecy from Ancient Egypt to Quantum Cryptography*.


## Note

- Image is of the Hill House (Helensburgh) Scotland by Charles Rennie Mackintosh â?? â??cagedâ?• pending renovation.

**Category**

1. Society

**Tags**

1. cryptograhy

2. cybersecurity

**Date Created**
October 16, 2021
**Author**
rcoyne99

default watermark